

## Blue Whale Physical Characteristics

Blue Whales belong to a group of marine animals known as cetaceans. Like all mammals, whales, dolphins and porpoises they are warm-blooded, breathe air and suckle their young.

Blue Whales can grow up to 30 metres in length and weigh up to 200 tons. In a full-grown adult blue whale, this enormous body is supported by a heart that can weigh approximately 450 kilograms.

Blue Whales are greyish-blue in colour with light spots. Each blue whale's markings are like fingerprints that distinguish one whale from another. The lower surfaces of blue whale flippers may be lighter grey or white.

The blue whale has also been called the "sulphur-bottom whale" because of the yellowish underside of some individuals. This colouration occurs because certain algae called "diatoms" live on the whale's body.

The blue whale has a small dorsal fin located near the fluke, and between 55 and 100 long grooves running lengthwise down its throat and chest. Blue whales are baleen whales, which means they do not have teeth but instead have a baleen plate to filter their main source of food, microscopic krill, from the ocean water.

